

NAVAL MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT News

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Navy Surgeon General Receives Djibouti's Highest Honor



U.S. Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Adam M. Robinson Jr. is presented with the Djibouti Medal of the Commander of the National Order, the nation's highest award, by Djibouti Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita. Robinson accepted the award on behalf of the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-3), whose work over the past decade has enhanced infectious disease surveillance within Djibouti. Photo by Capt. Cappy Surette, BUMED Public Affairs.

From Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy surgeon general was presented with the Medal of the Commander of the National Order by Djibouti's prime minister in Djibouti November 14.

After a meeting with Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh, Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Adam M. Robinson, Jr. was presented the highest award that can be bestowed by the African country by Djibouti Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita for the U.S. Navy's efforts in working with the African nation to improve its public health system.

The medal was presented to Robinson due to the work by U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 ([NAMRU-3](#)) to enhance infectious

disease surveillance within Djibouti. During the past decade, the Navy lab developed surveillance systems designed to focus on specific syndromes of interest while strengthening overall laboratory and surveillance capacity within the country.

"I humbly accept this award on behalf of the Navy men and women who have partnered with your country to help improve the health of the people of Djibouti and those throughout the Horn of Africa," said Robinson. "Medicine builds bridges, builds trust and cooperation. Our partnership with Djibouti benefits both our countries."

NAMRU-3 is a large research facility based in Cairo with expertise in infectious disease surveillance and public health issues. While the initial mission of the lab is to maintain the health of deployed U.S. service

members, NAMRU-3 has become an integral part of the public health system in Africa and across the Middle East. It plays a key role in terms of medical diplomacy. NAMRU-3 personnel and scientists routinely collaborate with regional research groups in the fields of disease surveillance, vaccine development and vector control for tropical diseases. They also train local scientists in areas of medical research and dealing with public health challenges.

Djibouti Minister of Health Abdullah Abdullah Miguil stated that through the support of his U.S. partners and the creation of a new public health law, the country has established a new National Institute of Public Health, which is designed to improve regional public health capacity.

"Our new institute's mission is to ensure the health security of the Djiboutian population and serve as a regional center of excellence for the Horn of Africa in areas related to infectious disease surveillance, research and control," said Miguil. "Our hope is that with the continued

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Commanding Officer's Message

As we bring 2010 and this decade to a close, I want to extend my best wishes to all of you who support our enterprise's biomedical research mission every day by your individual contributions. We could not do all the good things we do for our Sailors and Marines, our country and the world, without your dedication and efficiency. I could not be more proud of you!

To paraphrase one of the most famous works of fiction, Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution, "It is the best of times and the worst of times". We enjoy DoD and Navy leadership support for the Navy Medical R&D laboratory enterprise with investments in our lab infrastructure and support for our research efforts; but, our resource sponsors and our laboratories operate within the realities of the economic times we are in and we should probably expect level funding, at best, for next year even though our research continues to unfold with ever-increasing success and high acclaim. We focus our efforts on operational medicine and readiness, but through our partnerships with universities and private industry we share our technology and knowledge to bring health and well being to many as we touch the lives of people around the world. It is important for us to continue to tell our story through the pages of this newsletter and other venues to show our value to our warfighters, our leadership and ultimately, to the American people.

Please take time to remember those service members of our R&D military family, and all the other services members, who are deployed and won't be home this holiday. It is important to let our warfighters know we are all indebted to them and their families and grateful for their selflessness and commitment to America's security. Their personal sacrifices are gifts to all of us so we can safely enjoy our lives.

I sincerely hope you have a joyous holiday season and when driving or traveling exercise caution, responsibility and vigilance. Stay safe and enjoy your families and friends.

Commanding Officer sends,
Richard L. Haberberger, Jr.
CAPT, MSC, USN



From the Flag - The Holiday Spirit of Giving

Happy holidays Navy Medicine Support Command. Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Hanukah, the New Year, or just spending time with family and friends, I consider each of you the very essence of the holiday spirit of giving.

Over the past 12 months, I have seen your giving spirit first-hand as you gave of yourself to support Navy Medicine's mission of ensuring the health and readiness of our warfighters who serve in harm's way. Whether you work in logistics support, education and training, medical information technology, public health, research and development, or at headquarters in a support role, you continue to give of yourself and support Navy Medicine and the warfighter.

Your selflessness resulted in medical equipment delivery to doctors, nurses and corpsmen at sea and ashore. It trained those same providers to save lives on the battlefield. Giving of yourself ensured Navy and Marine Corps personnel readiness through disease prevention and healthy living support. And giving of yourself developed products and solutions to battlefield medical problems.

I thank each of you for giving of yourself – for your hard work and tireless efforts in 2010. Now, I encourage you to give a little back to yourself. Take some time during this holiday season to relax and recharge as you spend time with family and friends.

If your time with family or friends includes travel, please give back to yourself by remaining safe. If you're traveling out of the area, I recommend you check out the Travel Risk Planning System, or TRiPS. Information and links to TRiPS and other safety tools and information is available on the Naval Safety Center website at <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/>.

Thank you again for all you have given in 2010. Your giving spirit has saved lives, and I can think of no better contribution. May the holidays be merry and the New Year happy for you and the ones you love.

Eleanor V. Valentin
RDML, MSC, USN



Cmdr. David Blazes Deployed to Southern Partnership Aboard SWIFT

Provided by COMUSNAVSO/C4F
Public Affairs

Many active duty personnel are called to deploy in support of a wide variety of Navy and Defense Department missions. Cmdr. David Blazes, chief of the Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System Division at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, is currently deployed to Southern Partnership Station - 2011 (SPS-11) aboard High Speed Vessel SWIFT (HSV 2).

Recognizing health is a key component to security within a country and region, Blazes feels that his current assignment at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center has equipped him well for this mission. His experience working with the International Health Regulations 2005 in the setting of the influenza pandemic convinced him that militaries from around the globe should be capable of detecting, reporting and responding to epidemics in order to preserve security and stability.

He hopes to spread this message to his colleagues by speaking of these experiences and learning from their similar experiences. He will also be teaching outbreak investigation methodology and exchanging information on deployment health, public health epidemiology within the military and novel techniques for reporting disease outbreaks, such as the use of electronic disease surveillance tools.

SPS-11 is sort of a homecoming for Blazes...He worked in Peru, Ecuador and Chile, and hopes to rekindle relationships with his many colleagues in the region.

The embarked crew of Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force personnel are part of subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs), information sharing ventures and joint operations exchanges with local military and government agencies in support of SPS-11.



Cmdr. David Blazes with the SWIFT. Photo by MC2 Ricardo Reyes, COMUSNAVOS/C4F Public Affairs

The first mission for SPS-11 was to deliver much-needed disaster relief supplies in Haiti, including water purifiers and a mobile health clinic to assist with the ongoing cholera epidemic. From there, SPS-11 headed to seven Latin American countries where Blazes will be interfacing with military medical colleagues from Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The format of these interactions will not be clinical care through Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPs), rather they will be SMEEs.

SPS-11 is sort of a homecoming for Blazes. His previous assignment was at the [Naval Medical Research Center Detachment](#), Peru. He worked in Peru, Ecuador and Chile, and hopes to rekindle relationships with his many colleagues in the region.

The SPS-11 Medical Detachment also includes three Navy Hospital Corpsmen from commands around the country. They will share their experiences in Preventive Medicine, Combat Casualty Care and Combat Photography with their counterparts in each of these countries.

SPS-11 is the third Southern Partnership Station, but the first with a

Medical Detachment. SPS is an annual deployment of U.S. ships to the U.S. Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM's) area of responsibility in the Caribbean and Latin America. The mission's primary goal is information-sharing with navies, coast guards and civilian services throughout the region. SPS-11 is a key component of Partnership for the Americas, which also includes Continuing Promise and UNITAS. Partnership for the Americas is a primary example of how DoD values stability operations. It is clear that Latin America, the Caribbean and the U.S. share common interests and security concerns throughout the region.

Commander, U.S. Navy Southern Command (COMUSNAVSO) is the naval component command for SOUTHCOM and is responsible for all naval personnel and assets in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility. COMUSNAVSO conducts a variety of missions in support of the U.S. Maritime Strategy, including Theater Security Cooperation, relationship building, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, community relations, and counter-illicit trafficking operations.

NAMRU-3 Conducts Training, Studies Neurologic Disease in Georgia

By Darnell P. Gardner, Jr., Public Affairs Officer, NAMRU-3

A five-person team from U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-3) traveled to Tbilisi, Georgia, to conduct laboratory and epidemiologic training and to initiate a new protocol entitled, "Hospital-based Surveillance on the Etiologies of Acute Meningitis and Encephalitis in the Republic of Georgia."

Ms. Margaret Farrell, lead epidemiologist, explained, "This protocol is the first phase of an overarching plan to establish surveillance for acute infectious neurologic disease in the Republic of Georgia. In January 2011, we will initiate a complementary surveillance system for acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) at four predetermined hospital sites."

Dr. Jolanta Jacobs, Mr. Mohamed Abdel Maksoud and Ms. Engy Emil conducted laboratory training at the National Centers for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Infectious Diseases Hospital. This training included lectures on safety, sample collection and processing, and real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Additionally, the team conducted practical training related to molecular biology/serology and bacteriology

programming, operation and analysis of results from the ABI 7500 real-time PCR system; performed commercial enzyme-linked immunosorbent (ELISA) assays; calculated, analyzed and confirmed the associated results; prepared and processed media and identified unknown pathogens in cerebral-spinal fluid; and conducted serotyping, preservation of isolates and quality control.

The knowledge and skills gained from this training will be applied toward the laboratory testing associated with three Department of Defense Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System (DoD-GEIS) funded protocols: "Characterization of the infectious causes of acute febrile illness in the Republic of Georgia," "Hospital-based Surveillance on the Etiologies of Acute Meningitis and Encephalitis in the Republic of

Georgia," and "The Epidemiology and Etiology of Flaccid Paralysis of Infectious Origin in the Republic of Georgia."

"I was very impressed by the cheerful professionalism and eagerness to learn and apply the knowledge for their institutions, shown by all of the Georgian staff in all of the laboratories visited," said Dr. Jacobs.



Ms. Engy Habashy instructing NCDC technicians on PCR techniques. Photos provided by NAMRU-3 Public Affairs.

Farrell and Ms. Suzanne Restrepo-Martinez, along with Dr. Tamuna Akhvlediani, the in-country study coordinator, conducted protocol-initiation training with the surveillance staff, which included clinical personnel from the four hospital study sites and data management staff from NCDC. This training covered an overview and background of the surveillance protocol, standard clinical procedures, staff roles and responsibilities, informed consent, data and sample collection, study documentation, database management, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Martinez then conducted an M&E assessment of the hospital sites. The assessment included observation of the current M&E procedures followed by discussion of and training related to any identified gaps or inconsistencies with the hospital clinical and laboratory staff.

"We are looking forward to the next Tbilisi visit, which will include laboratory training related to microscopic agglutination testing (MAT); the introduction of electronic data collection via personal digital assistant (PDAs); a neurologic/neurophysiologic consultation by CDC neuroepidemiologist, Dr. James Sejvar; and the establishment of surveillance for AFP," concluded Farrell.



Ms. Engy Habashy (second from left) and Mr. Mohamed Maksoud (fourth from left) with Georgian National Centers for Disease Control laboratory technicians.

Who We Are - Office of Legal and Technology Transfer Services

Resource Multiplier – Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer

The Office of Legal and Technology Transfer Service (OLTS) provides general business, legal, intellectual property and technology transfer support to the Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC) enterprise and military hospital research programs.

"The leap from the laboratory bench to a final product for use by the military is huge and requires the collective and committed efforts of our best scientific, legal and business minds," said Mr. Ken Hemby, OLTS department head and NMRC counsel. "These efforts further Navy medical technology development and transition to government or commercial use by ensuring adequate U.S. and international intellectual property (IP) legal protection, marketing, licensing and the fostering of Navy laboratory collaborations."

NMRC has 71 active patents, with 57 percent licensed; the patents range from vaccines and drugs to medical devices. Each year, OLTS pursues patent protection for about 20 new inventions and the team currently has over 50 U.S. and 20 foreign applications in various stages of the patent process. The office is also assisting in over 50 additional U.S. and foreign licensed applications being processed by licensees.

"During my tenure as a leader in vaccine development, the Office of Legal and Technology Transfer Services has played a pivotal role in growing the command's intellectual property portfolio, making it attractive to potential industry partners, and negotiating license agreements that are in the best interest of the warfighter," said Capt. Stephen Savarino, head of NMRC's Enteric Diseases Department.

Patent protection allows Navy technology to be developed faster by leveraging resources from private sector



The OLTS staff, from left: Ms. Roxanne Charles, Mr. Ken Hemby, Dr. Charles Schlagel, Dr. Al Churilla, Ms. Ning Yang, Ms. Leslie Gunn Jordan, Ms. Kelly Svendsen. Photo by Phil Collins.

companies. These companies develop Navy technology with the aim of commercialization, then the products are available directly for use by the Department of Defense or through the acquisition process.

Technology licensing provides valuable incentives to these companies to enter into collaborations, principally through Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs). CRADAs are agreements, not contracts, between a federal laboratory and a non-federal entity. Through CRADAs, Navy Medicine can leverage the expertise, skill levels, equipment and financial resources of the private sector in fulfillment of warfighter needs. OLTS has a portfolio of over 500 CRADAs, representing over 41 percent of all CRADAs Navy-wide.

The net result in patenting and technology transfer ensures products can be provided to the warfighter faster and at less cost. Also, royalties from

the licensed technology can be used to further additional research and to provide incentive for new innovations.

Examples include the Navy patented use of an anti-oxidant, N-acetylcysteine (NAC), to reduce the effects of noise-induced hearing loss, licensed to a commercial company. The patented method of using the drug reduces the amount of free radicals in the cochlea of the ear, which are destructive to the ear's hair cells. Licensing of this Navy IP significantly accelerated its development and will ultimately speed its potential acquisition for use by warfighters.

Another licensed drug is a Navy invented, FDA-approved drug that provides important treatment for adults, especially older veterans, with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis and for children ages 6-17 with polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis. The license for this drug brings significant royalties used to fund additional research efforts.

NMRC recently licensed patents to an important vaccine candidate for enterotoxigenic *Escherichia coli*. Patents for these vaccine candidates enabled a collaborative agreement between the Navy and commercial partners to further develop vaccines against this militarily important bacteria.

The OLTS staff includes Hemby and Associate Counsels Dr. Al Churilla, senior patent attorney, and Ms. Ning Yang, patent attorney. Legal support is provided by Ms. Kelly Svendsen, paralegal. The Office of Research Technology Applications (ORTA) staff includes Ms. Roxanne Charles, CRADA manager; Dr. Charles Schlagel, licensing/support agreements; and Ms. Leslie Gunn Jordan, royalties coordinator. For more information, visit the [NMRC website](#).

Defense Department 15th Annual Technology Transfer Meeting

The Department of Defense (DoD) Technology Transfer Innovation Planning Team (TTIPT) hosted their 15th annual meeting in November at the Sheraton Hill hotel in Philadelphia. This event provided a focused strategic planning forum for DoD legal and Technology Transfer (T2) professionals from across the U.S. to execute the DoD's national security mission and showcase the latest advancements driving T2.

The Naval Medical Research Center's Dr. Charles Schlagel, Director of the Office of Technology Transfer, collaborated with the DoD's Office of Technology Transition (OTT) teams to plan the various breakout sessions. Also, Ms. Roxanne Charles, NMRC's Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) Manager, led a training session that addressed common legal and regulatory topics in medical CRADAs. The event featured many high-impact workshops covering T2 issues on the role of regulatory agencies in technology commercialization and the potential to involve international governmental entities in collabora-

tive research, among others. Along with the partnering opportunities, the event gave participants a forum for networking with their DoD T2 peers and policymakers.

Ultimately, an inspirational event highlight was the T2 success story of a former Naval Medical Research Institute researcher, Dr. Carl June. His case study described the successful commercialization of cutting-edge inventions related to T-cell proliferation involving the CD28 pathway and its association with cyclosporine-resistant interleukin 2 gene expression. Dr. June's key insights on issues that arose from his multiple patents, material transfer agreements, CRADAs and licensing agreements



Roxanne Charles, NMRC CRADA Manager, hosting training session on Medical CRADAs at the DOD TTIPT event. Photo by Leslie Gunn-Jordan.

involved in developing Anergy therapy and the drug Orencia called attention to the best practices and lessons learned from an inventor who was heavily involved in T2. He presented a compelling case study that highlighted the impact of DoD technology transfer as a driver of our national security mission.

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technical support from our partners, including NAMRU-3, this goal can be achieved."

Robinson was in Djibouti attending a first of its kind international scientific conference hosted by the Djibouti Ministry of Health November 13-14. The conference brought international government and civilian health industry leaders together to discuss ways to integrate efforts to bolster the public health programs throughout the Horn of Africa. The conference developed in partnership with the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Agency for International Development, UNICEF and many other international health organizations.

The conference focused on the security challenges involved with the spread of infectious diseases in today's interconnected world. According to Ken Earhart, India country

director for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a local outbreak of a novel disease can quickly become a global issue due to the ease of global travel.

"Poor health systems are a security challenge," said Earhart. "The strategies to improving health security should encompass prevention, strengthening of public health systems and real partnership. While it's clear that poor health systems are security issues, we must remember they are human, morale and humanitarian ones as well."

Robinson agreed with the security challenge presented with infectious diseases and stated the U.S. Navy was committed to working with global partners to identify challenges and work together to isolate disease where feasible to maintain conditions of stability.

"By helping those in need around the world, the United States not only helps bolster stability but also works to create conditions of hope, which are the foundations of healthy societies," said Robinson.

During his remarks at the closing ceremony, Robinson commended Djibouti as a leader amongst African militaries by maintaining high standards in professionalism, the principle of civilian control and internationally recognized standards of conduct.

"Because your military is so professional, it makes it that much easier to do the work that we do together," said Robinson. "Our relationship is mutually beneficial because we share our findings with the local authorities throughout the Horn of Africa and help them develop their own capability of disease surveillance and treatment."

Solving Science Challenges Requires Growing the Workforce

By Geoff Fein, ONR Corporate Strategic Communications Public Affairs

Top Navy officials said November 8 at the 2010 Office of Naval Research Partnership Conference that some of the more pressing challenges facing the science and technology community may never be solved if more isn't done to develop the next generation of researchers.

"Our nation needs a talented workforce of science and technology (S&T) engineers," said Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work, addressing the more than 1,500 attendees who gathered to discuss collaboration throughout the naval community.

"We have got to grow the future of the S&T community and we need a partnership to do so," Work said.

That future force is vital to overcoming the hurdles facing the S&T community, such as anti-access and area-denial weapons, as well as the cost of operating and maintaining a

Navy, the under secretary said. "We can't afford to spend billions and billions of dollars on ships and aircraft that don't reach their service lives and which cannot operate in this regime [anti-access and area denial]. We have to find a better way of reducing total ownership cost."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead was also looking beyond the horizon to cultivating tomorrow's scientist.

"There are a couple of trends that are important to me...that those in the room have the ability to address remarkably well," Roughead said. "One area is the base from which you grow your intellectual capital, and that's the young people in our country—the young men and women who we will need more than ever before."

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that the need for scientists and engineers will double in the next 20 years; however, only 16 percent of U.S. college graduates attain a science, technology, engineering, or

mathematics (STEM) degree. By comparison, 60 percent to 70 percent of students in Asia and some parts of Europe graduate with STEM credentials, according to statistics provided by the National Science Foundation.

"If we don't do something about it, nothing will happen," Roughead said. "That is something that is a fundamental for all of us interested in taking technology to the future."

Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Nevin Carr, who followed Under Secretary Work, discussed the importance of the three-day conference and ended his speech by stressing the need for more U.S. students to pursue STEM-related careers.

The Navy spent about \$50 million on STEM outreach last year. "The Secretary [of the Navy] wants to double that investment in the next five years," Carr said. "It's the right thing to do, not just for the country, but we want those bright young minds to do good things for the Navy, whether it's in uniform, in academia or laboratories."

Happy Holidays from the NMRC Ombudsman!

It is that time of year again: the Holiday Season! Hopefully everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with friends and family and is looking forward to another month of holiday celebrations! Take an opportunity to spend time with your families and take time to remember all of our fellow Sailors who are currently overseas and away from their loved ones during this season.

How to plan the perfect stress-free holiday meal! Here are seven tips to minimize the fuss and maximize the fun:

- Keep your guest list realistic.
- Make it a potluck buffet.
- Plan ahead.
- Keep an eye on expenses.
- Make and freeze some foods in advance.
- Get help with chores.
- Have diversions on hand for children.

Check out MilitaryOneSource.com for more helpful advice and tips.

Also, because one of the biggest stressors we often deal with around the holidays is money, here are some holiday money traps to avoid:

- Simply do not spend more than you can afford. Make a budget and stick to it. Your friends and family will understand.
- Always read the fine print before any large purchase, especially on those that promise "no interest until February".
- Watch hidden transaction fees on debit cards. Banks often charge a small fee for every use.
- Don't wait until the last minute to shop. Keep your options open and do your homework.

If you need help finding all the great resources the military has to offer or just need someone to talk to, please contact me at angela.prouty@med.navy.mil or 217-722-4981.

Angela Prouty
Ombudsman, NMRC

NAMRL Research Excellence on Display at AMSUS Annual Meeting



Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Adam Robinson, Jr. presents Cmdr. Rita Simmons with the R&D Award at AMSUS Annual Awards Ceremony. Photos provided by NAMRL PAO.

Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory (NAMRL) researchers attended the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) 116th Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. during the first week of November. Principal investigators Lt. Marc Taylor and Lt. Cmdr. Hong Gao showcased their most recent research at the Association of Medical Service

Corps Officers of the Navy (AMSCON) Annual Joint Poster Session. Taylor presented three posters, which examined potential methods to counteract stress symptoms during Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) training and highlighted recent findings from NAMRL's Operational Stress and Resilience Program (OSRP). Gao

presented a poster review on the effects of acute hypoxia on visual performance.

NAMRL's research excellence was also on display during the AMSUS Annual Awards Ceremony. Taylor was nominated for the Rising Star Award, which is given to an individual who has made a significant achievement within their federal health care

discipline and is on an ascending path to executive leadership. The AMSUS Awards Committee selected former NAMRL Officer in Charge and newly appointed [Naval Medical Research Unit-Dayton](#) Executive Officer Cmdr. Rita Simmons as the recipient of the 2010 Research and Development Award for her research on the efficacy of intranasal scopolamine as a motion sickness countermeasure during military operations. The 116th AMSUS General Chairperson and Navy Surgeon General, Vice Adm. Adam Robinson, Jr., presented Simmons the honor, which is bestowed upon an individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of medical research and development.

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Please contact the Public Affairs Officer at 301-319-9378 or svc.pao.nmrc@med.navy.mil with questions or to submit an article.

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NAMRL research on display at the AMSCON Annual Joint Poster Session.